

April 28, 2000

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From the Hawai'i State Legislature's Public Access Room

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERIM

By Suzanne Marinelli
Public Access Room Manager

"The most important part of the Legislative Session is the Interim." This statement is never truer than when we talk about citizen lobbying. Your success during a session is directly related to the work you have done before it even begins. Here are some points to consider before beginning:



Learn the legislative and budget processes. What part of the processes am I not clear about? Is the information I need in the Citizens' Guide? Can the Public Access Room fulfill my needs? Did a lack of understanding about the process cause trouble in the past?

Continued inside



Public Access Room Staff 2000, l. to r.: Bob Jones, Suzanne Marinelli, Diana Leone, Marti Tom, Kaponi Ciotti, Kimo Brown, Honu Huihui

SO LONG, FAREWELL...

The Public Access Room staff wants to thank all our thousands of patrons for making the 2000 legislative session a truly memorable one! **So please join us in the Room Tuesday, May 2, from 4 p.m. onward, for our *Adjournment Sine Die* festivities.**

We'll have refreshments and light-hearted conversation as we all wind down from the challenges of the past months, and share combat stories.

We know how hard you worked this session. You got some legislation passed that you wanted. You stopped some bills you didn't like. And for the ones that got away – there's always next year. Mahalo nui loa for letting us help you pursue your goals.

Remember, the Public Access Room will be here for you in 2001. But don't forget the interim! See Suzanne Marinelli's column at right for tips on how to begin working toward your legislative goals. As we often say, May through December are the most important months of the legislative year.



This year, the Public Access Room celebrated 10 successful years in operation. Here is a collection of images from events commemorating the Anniversary: a Feb. 25 dinner at the Pagoda Restaurant and the March 1 recognition of the PAR's founders during the House and Senate floor sessions.



Sen. Les Ihara, Jr., one of the legislators who supported the establishment of the PAR in 1990, with Electra Anderson, the PAR's first Coordinator, at the Public Access Dinner held at the Pagoda Hotel. Public Access Coordinator Kimo Brown was the Master-of-Ceremonies.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE INTERIM:

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Review previous legislation.

What similar legislation did not pass before, and why? Is there testimony from past hearings that I can review? Who opposed, and who supported, my legislation in the past, and why? Legislators raised what concerns? What other issues, past or future, may relate to or interact with my issue? What did I do or not do this session that did or didn't work?

Identify supporters and adversaries.

Who supports my position? Who opposes it? Why? Is there any way to work with my adversaries to reach a compromise acceptable to us both? How and where should I meet with them?

Research. What resources are available that deal with my issue? Where can these be found? Have studies been done on my issue before, and by whom?

Network. What organizations share my views? How can I contact and meet with these people? How can I use other organizations' resources (such as newsletters or volunteers) to enhance my lobbying efforts?

Meet with legislators. Which legislators should I meet with? Which committees will be dealing with my issue? Can my own district's legislators help me? Would it be most convenient for the legislator to meet me at the Capitol, or at some other location? What other people should join us?

Develop a public relations campaign. How can I approach media outlets to get my position out to the public? How do I write, and disseminate, press releases? Which medium is better: TV; radio; newspaper; e-mail, or standing on a corner? Or in what combination, given my resources?

Prepare handouts. What sort of informational handouts would best suit my needs? Brochures, or flyers? Letters? Cartoons? How would I disseminate these items, and to whom? How much would it cost to do so? Should the materials be fancy or basic? Could I include my materials with a mailing or in the materials of another organization? What approach should my materials take: passionate? informational? aggressive?



Honorees on the House Floor, l. to r., the Rev. Robert Fraser, Council of Churches; Marguerite Peach, American Association of University Women; Evelyn Bender, League of Women Voters; and Electra Anderson, first PAR coordinator.



PAR supporters celebrating 10 years of improved public access at the Hawaii State Legislature.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Create legislation for next session. Should we submit a bill or a resolution? Should the legislation create something new, or eliminate something that already exists? Is there a way to stick my issue into a bill dealing with a different, but related, issue? What contingency plans should I have in case my legislation dies?

Fundraisers. Do I need to raise funds to enhance my lobbying? If so, what sort of fundraisers would be appropriate given the time and personnel required? How much do I need to raise? If I raise less than I need, what lobbying efforts could or should be curtailed? If I raise more than I anticipate, what lobbying efforts can be enhanced or added?

Develop cost estimates and potential funding sources. What costs are associated with implementing my legislation? Are the funds readily available? Where would the funds come from? Are my expectations realistic? Will new sources of funds need to be identified? Is this issue usually a high priority for the Legislature when setting budget priorities?

Did you know?

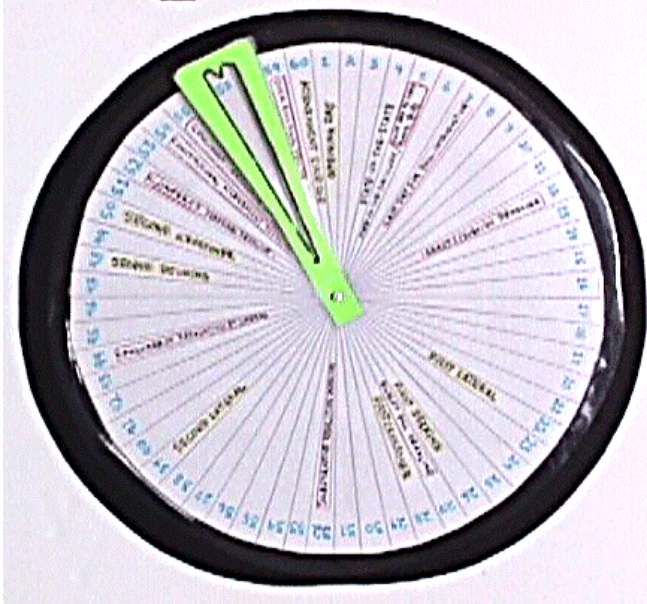
Gov. Ben Cayetano proclaimed March 6, 2000, "Public Access Day." And the Honolulu City Council presented a "Certificate of Appreciation" to the PAR on Feb. 25.

IN THE MEDIA

The Public Access Room was featured in print, radio and TV news reports many times this session, including:

- PAR volunteer Honu Huihui was featured March 6 in Channel 8's "I Ka Pono" feature.
- Suzanne Marinelli and Electra Anderson spoke on radio stations KRTR 96.3 FM and KULA 1460 AM.
- KITV 4 did a piece on the PAR's accessibility to the disabled in April.
- The PAR was the subject of Advertiser and Star-Bulletin features in February.

Time waits for no one



The Public Access Room's "Legislative Clock" marked the passing of the session, day by day.

By the numbers

Everyone knows that many bills are introduced, but few are passed. Here's a look at the numbers as they were late Friday afternoon. Tuesday, May 2, will be the last day of session.

	House	Senate	Total
Bills introduced 1999	1,642	1,755	3,397
Bills introduced 2000	1,201	1,270	2,471
Total bills for biennium	2,843	3,025	5,868
First Crossover 2000	575	581	1,156
Pending Governor's action	12	5	17
Signed by Governor	59	28	87
Vetoed by Governor	3	2	5

Some parting words...



Public Access
Coordinator

Kimo Brown

It has been an amazing decade-long journey for public access at the Legislature, and it has been an honor and a privilege to travel with many of you for most of that time. We've come so far; how much further we go remains to be seen. And through it all, the Public Access Room has been committed to being your partner. After all, a truly successful democracy works only when the voices of the governed are informed, heard, and heeded.

We'd like to thank you for helping us to be effective. So many of you supported our attempt to improve our service to the public by adding a second full-time position in the room. Thank you for your testimony, your questions, your lobbying. It was a true community effort. Every day, our goal is to be worthy of your support.

We wish you the best for the rest of the year. Be steadfast in your efforts – the next legislative session is only eight months away. And, as always, we will be there with you. Me ke aloha pumehana.